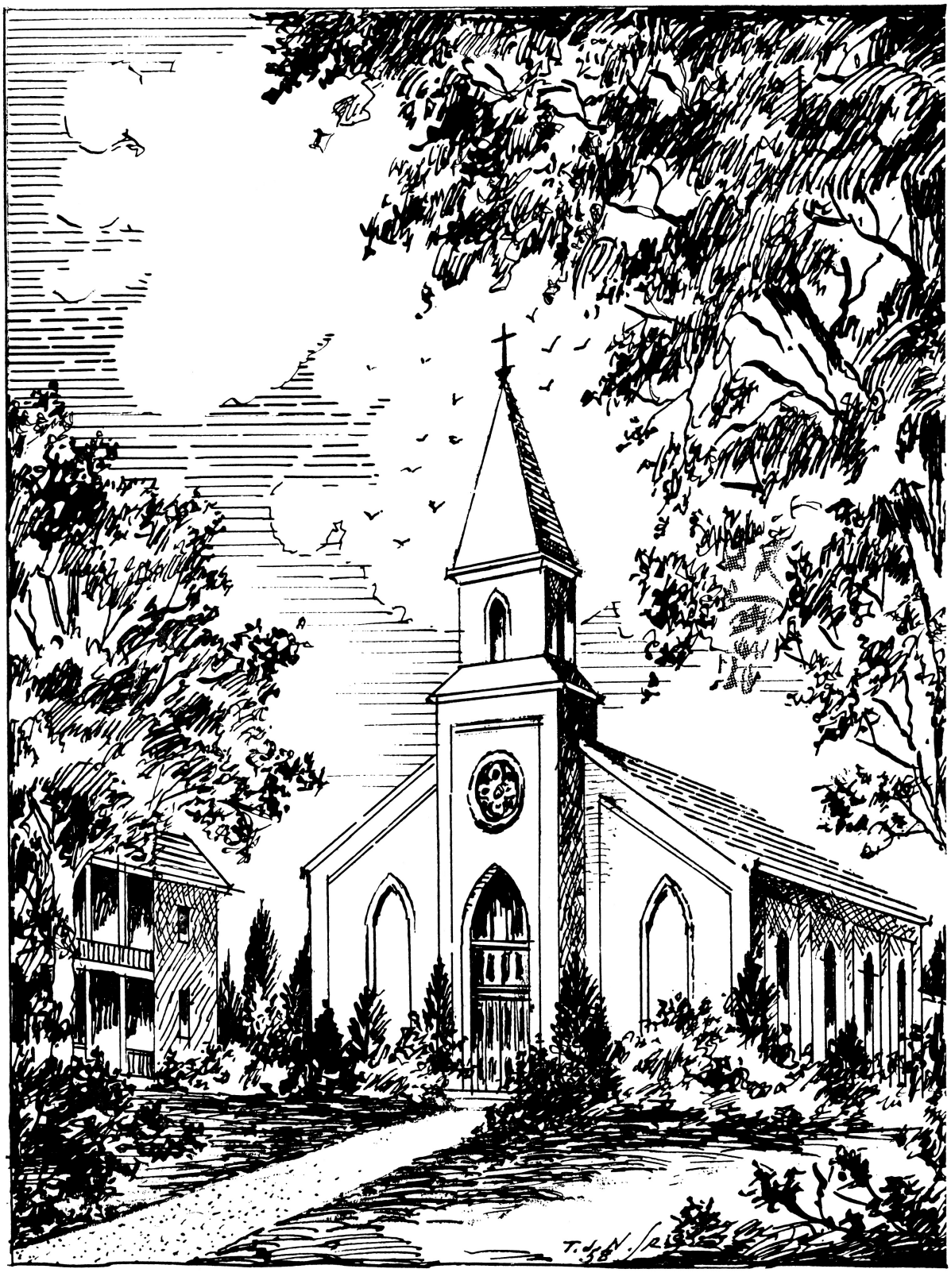

1808 -- 1958

St. Clare Church

Colesburg, Kentucky

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The

Sesquicentennial

Of

St. Clare's Church

On

Clear Creek

In

Hardin County

Kentucky

1808 - 1958

By

John A. Lyons

PART ONE

THE FIRST CHURCH OF ST. CLARE

The Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky, published by Ben J. Webb in 1884, states:

> The county of Hardin, which was formed in 1792 out of a portion of the territory originally attached to that of Nelson, was afterwards subdivided as follows: Ohio county was taken from it in 1798; Breckinridge, in 1799; Grayson, in 1810; Daviess, in 1815; Meade, in 1823; Larue, in 1843; and, in part, Hart, in 1819. The oldest of the many churches now to be found in the original district known as the county of Hardin, is undoubtedly that of St. Clare, near the present town of Colesburg.
>
> The first church-station at this point was in the house of one James French, where mass was said by Father Badin as early as the years 1804-05. Among the oldest Catholic settlers of the locality may be named William Cole, from whom the town of Colesburg has its name; Mrs. Adam Wise, married to a non-Catholic husband, and their four children, Willis, Gabriel, Elisha and Teresa, all born during the last decade of the last century, the last named of whom became Sister Margaret of the Loretto Society; Mark Beaven; Raphael French; Thomas and Mathew J o h n s o n; William, known as "Bee" Bryan and Jacob Duffner, one of whose daughters, Mrs. Mary Cole, was surviving as late as the year 1883, at the age of 86 years. This Mr. Duffner is still remembered as a man of extraordinary piety. James Booth, whose wife was Elizabeth Johnson, came from Maryland in 1812, and settled near the church of St. Clare. One of their sons, Pius Booth, is still living. Bennet Fowler, married to Nancy Duffner; James Huff, married to Susan Johnson; and Edward Miles, married to Eleanor Forrest, were members of St. Clare's congregation.

The Reverend Stephen Theodore Badin, mentioned above, was the first priest ordained in the United States. Following his ordination in 1793 at Baltimore, Maryland, he was sent by Bishop Carroll, the first bishop in the United States, to the scattered missions of Kentucky. It is likely that the Catholic settlement in the present parish of St. Clare was not established until 1803 or 1804. The Second Census of Kentucky, compiled by G. Glenn Clift, lists Adam Wise, Raphael French and Thomas Johnson as residing in Nelson County as late as 1800, while James French, William Bryan and Jacob Duffner were residents of Washington County.

The settlement had its beginning along the waters of Clear Creek, a small tributary of the Rolling Fork, which flows through a beautiful but wild and rugged section of the Muldraugh range of hills. The first direct reference we have to the congregation by name is to be found in a letter of Father Badin to Bishop Carroll, written in 1806, in which the missionary, in relating an injury he received while riding on horseback, stated:

> I had the misfortune of dislocating my left knee this summer by falling into a sinkhole in the night, when my guide got lost on the Rolling Fork near the place where I was going to officiate next day in St. Clare's congregation.

In the same letter, he wrote: "A Chapel is building there on 100 acres of land procured for church purposes." However, the good priest was a little premature in his announcement. Perhaps the work of clearing the land had begun, but the construction of the building was delayed.

The Reverend Charles Nerinckx, who was destined to establish the Lorettine Community and who also became noted as a builder of churches, had arrived in Kentucky in 1805, and it was about the time of Father Badin's accident that he

began to attend the settlement on Clear Creek. Several months later, he reported that "the congregation of St. Clare has seventeen families and everything is in readiness for a church." Before the end of 1807, work on the new building was begun, and in the following June, one hundred and fifty years ago, he was happy to inform his friends in his native Europe:

> Came home this evening from St. Clare's congregation. The church is finished up to the roof. I intend to build a steeple (I usually make them twenty-three feet above the ridge of the roof, with cross and weather vane), in hopes of obtaining a bell. St. Clare's church is built on a hill. Many non-Catholics have subscribed for it. God reward them with the gift of faith.

It is worthy of note that in the same year, 1808, the Holy See erected the Dioceses of Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Bardstown.

No doubt the log building was used as a "fair-weather" church as soon as the walls were up, for the small cabins of the settlers could not accommodate all the parishioners for divine services. There the congregation assembled until winter set in. Father Nerinckx was anxious to complete the church, but in the severe weather nothing could be accomplished, and during the warm months the men were busy in their fields. Moreover, there were no funds available, for the pioneers dealt not with money but rather in exchange. Farm tools, equipment and other necessities were traded for their crops. New settlers came, but they too were poor and had to devote their time to establishing their homes.

The work of completing the church dragged on for nearly two years and the energetic Nerinckx viewed this as an indication that his people were wanting in fervor in the interests of their religion. In a letter to the Baltimore prelate, written in May 1810, he complained:

> The church of St. Clare will be finished this month. Although small, it has cost me almost three years of incessant labor to build it, owing to the lack of zeal of the thirty-four families constituting this congregation, which I have attended for four years without one cent of salary.

In the next year, the Most Reverend Benedict Joseph Flaget, the first bishop of Bardstown, arrived in Kentucky to take possession of his see, and early in the following January he made an episcopal visitation to St. Clare's Church. We learn from the Bishop's diary that he and Father Nerinckx set out from St. Stephen's, Father Badin's headquarters at the site of the present Loretto motherhouse, on Saturday, January 4, and rode twenty-seven miles to Clear Creek. They arrived late that evening at the home of Adam Wise, where the missionaries were hospitably received. Sunday and Monday, the feast of the Epiphany, were spent at St Clare's. The Bishop returned to this isolated parish during the summer to administer Confirmation. The sacrament was conferred there for the first time on Sunday, August 23. He makes mention of his stay with the Wises and remarks: "Too much levity at dinner." We can imagine that the children, Willis, Gabriel, Elisha and Teresa, who became a nun, were a happy, jovial lot, too boisterous for the bishop, who had been reared under the strict discipline of the seminaries in France.

In 1813, Father Nerinckx was relieved of part of his extensive missionary field, and the care of St. Clare's fell to the Reverend Guy Ignatius Chabrat, who had ben elevated to the priesthood on December 21, 1811. Father Chabrat, who was the first priest ordained in the Diocese, later became coadjutor bishop to the venerable Flaget. In 1814, the newly ordained Peter Schaeffer was given charge of the congregations in Breckinridge and Grayson Counties. He attended the church at Clear Creek when he made the missionary circuit from his headquarters at the seminary of St. Thomas in Nelson county. Four years later, he returned to his native Germany.

Father Nerinckx visited his former parish soon after Father Schaeffer left the diocese and, on observing that the baptismal records were not kept up to date, inscribed the following note in the register: "This jump of five years is the effect of negligence, ignorance or inadvertance. Names must be accurately transcribed by the priest himself." It is likely that the missionaries who attended St. Clare's during this period entered the records at St. Thomas Church in Nelson County, where they resided. The first register of this church has been lost, but the second book, which begins in 1826, contains entries from Colesburg.

The name of Father Anthony Ganilh appears in the records of the Clear Creek congregation in 1819. A Frenchman by birth, he was ordained by Bishop Flaget for the Diocese of Bardstown in 1817 or 1818. Possessed of a roving disposition, he also labored in Cincinnati, Detroit, Natchez, Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Texas, before he went back to his native land around the 1840's.

At the time when Ganilh was attending St. Clare's, Bardstown was rapidly taking on the appearance of an episcopal city. The cathedral, which stands so stately even to this day, was solemnly dedicated on August 8, 1819, and on the following Sunday Father John B. David was consecrated coadjutor bishop to the saintly Flaget. It was the first consecration of a bishop west of the Alleghany Mountains. The two prelates took up their residence in the present rectory adjoining the cathedral and, a few weeks later, the older seminarians at St. Thomas moved there to establish the major seminary of St. Joseph. Early in the next year, a day school was formed in the basement of the seminary. It was the beginning of St. Joseph's College.

The next priest to attend St. Clare's was the Reverend Philip J. Hosten. Bishop David, in a letter written on December 12, 1820, stated:

> The minor seminary is in charge of M. Derigaud to whome I have appointed as an assistant M. Hosten, who is a priest since September and who has, in addition, another charge, that of another little congregation.

According to the church register, Father Hosten administered baptism at Colesburg in November of that year. In August of the following summer, he became the first resident pastor of the first Catholic church in Louisville. Two and a half months later, this zealous priest died of typhoid fever, contracted while assisting the victims of the epidemic in his parish.

Father Hosten's successor in the care of St. Clare's congregation was the Reverend William F. X. O'Brien, a native of Maryland, who had labored for a number of years at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He came to Kentucky in 1820 and took up his residence with the bishops. He was engaged in teaching at the newly established major seminary and in missionary work until he suffered a nervous breakdown three years later. Upon his recovery, he returned to the East and died at Baltimore in 1832.

The Reverend Thomas Butler attended the Colesburg mission from 1824 to 1826. He was born in Ireland and received his seminary training in Kentucky, where he was ordained in 1821. Near the end of 1826, he left the diocese and probably returned to his native land. The records of St. Joseph's Cathedral, Bardstown, indicate that other clergymen stationed there occasionally visited the mission of St. Clare. One of them, the illustrious Francis P. Kenrick, who was ordained in the Propaganda College in Rome, later became the archbishop of Baltimore. The Reverend Robert A. Abell was the first Kentuckian to minister to the congregation. He baptized at Clear Creek in September, 1828. Father Abell was born at Calvary in Marion County in 1792 and died at Louisville in 1873.

In the fall of 1826, the jubilee of Pope Leo XII was promulgated in the Diocese of Bardstown. Bishop Flaget went from parish to parish conducting the religious exercises. The visitation proceeded slowly and the work was not yet completed by the end of 1827. Bishop David, in a letter written in November of that year, informs us:

Mgr. Flaget is going to continue the exercises and, after Clear Creek, he has the intention of proceeding directly to Union County.

However, unfavorable winter weather and a journey to Baltimore in the spring to consecrate Archbishop Whitfield delayed the bishop and he was unable to visit western Kentucky until the following summer. We read in M. J. Spalding's LIFE OF BENEDICT JOSEPH FLAGET:

> On his return from Union county, he gave the jubilee in Grayson and Hardin counties, assisted by Rev. Father Kenrick and other clergymen. The exercises were everywhere attended with the usual consoling success.

Father Daniel Kelly, a young Irishman, who had been ordained at Bardstown in November, 1828, was appointed to St. Thomas Church and the Colesburg mission about a year later. In the summer of 1830, he was transferred to St. Mary's College in Marion County. Afflicted with ill health, he finally returned to his native land in 1857.

The Reverend F. X. Evremond Harissart of the Bardstown Cathedral attended St. Clare's for the balance of the year 1830. Born in Paris, France, he was ordained for the Diocese of New Orleans in 1818 and came from Louisiana to Kentucky several years later. In 1832, Father Evremond affiliated with the Jesuits, who were then in charge of St. Mary's College. About 1844, he went back to Paris where he died in 1859.

The ministration of the Clear Creek congregation fell to the Reverend Linus O. Coomes in 1831. He was born about 1801, his parents having moved from Virginia to Kentucky. Elevated to the priesthood near Christmas, 1826, he was given charge of St. Thomas Church and the missions attached in 1830. In the next year, his newly ordained brother, Walter S. Coomes, who was born in Virginia in 1796, was appointed to assist him. Their care of St. Clare's ended in 1835. Linus, whose health was poor, died at St. Thomas ten years later. Walter departed this life in Louisville in 1871.

During the pastorate of the Coomes brothers, good Bishop David resigned and Father Chabrat, who had formerly attended the Clear Creek mission, was consecrated coadjutor bishop to Flaget.

The Reverend Francis Chambige, who was born in France in 1807, was ordained at Bardstown in October, 1834, and in the next year was sent to Bethlehem Academy in Hardin County. There he attended the surrounding missions, which included the congregation on Clear Creek. He made monthly visits to this parish until the spring of 1837, when the Reverend Stephen Ward, a native of Ireland, began to minister to St. Clare's. One year later, Father Ward was transferred to Union County. For reasons of health, he received an "Exeat" to visit his native land in April, 1839. He never returned to Kentucky, but seven or eight years later a Stephen Ward affiliated with the New York Diocese. He died at St. Augustine's Church in New York City in 1863. Very likely this was the same Father Ward. The archives of the New York Archdiocese have no record of his antecedents except that he was born in 1800. Father Chambige resumed care of Colesburg when Father Ward went to Union County and continued his ministrations there until 1839. His last years were spent at Nazareth, where he died in 1877.

A future archibishop became the next pastor of St. Clare's, and it is interesting to note that he attended this distant mission from Portland, which now embraces the north-west section of Louisville. We read in the records of the Colesburg church:

> By a letter of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Chabrat, coadjutor of Bardstown, the Rev. N. J. Perche was appointed pastor of the Clear Creek congregation in place of Rev. F. Chambige. Rev. Perche began his monthly visits in November, 1839, and bound himself to visit the congregation and keep

church at St. Clare's Church once a month for one, two or three days, according to the wants of the congregation. His first care in conformity with the will of the Bishop was to compose a regular committee of trustees for the management of temporal business. In consequence he presented to the Bishop as candidates for the committee, Messrs. John Brewer, John Ryan, Felix Fowler and James Booth. By letter of Jan. 1, 1840, the Bishop sanctions the nomination of these four gentlemen as trustees of the Clear Creek congregation.

At the first meeting, Jan. 29, 1840, Rev. Perche promised to come every month for forty dollars a year.

Father Perche, who attended St. Clare's for about a year, was born in Angers, France, in 1805. He was ordained in his native land in 1829 and nine years later came to Kentucky. He was directed to establish the Church of Our Lady in the suburbs of Louisville in 1839. Near the end of 1841, he left the diocese and spent the remainder of his life in Louisiana. He was consecrated coadjutor to Archbishop Odin in 1870, and at the latter's death, a few weeks later, be became archbishop of New Orleans. His death occurred in 1883.

PART II

THE SECOND CHURCH OF ST. CLARE

A new era for the congregation of St. Clare began when the Reverend Charles I. Coomes was appointed to the parish. The church register informs us:

> By appointment of the Right Rev'd. Bishop Chabrat, Coadjutor of Bardstown, the Rev.d C. I. Coomes was intrusted with the charge of St. Clare's Church on Clear Creek on the 1st of January in the year 1841.

Father Coomes was born near Bardstown in 1805 and was ordained in 1830. He spent the greatest part of his priestly life in the missions centering around Stithton (now Fort Knox) and Flaherty in Meade County, and for over twenty-one years the parish at Colesburg was under his care. During his administration the second church of St. Clare was erected. This energetic priest was most faithful in attending the spiritual needs of his people and the congregation on Clear Creek owes him a lasting debt of gratitude for his untiring service. His death took place in Louisville in 1881.

Father Coomes was very careful in keeping the church records and he was the first clergyman at St. Clare's to enter the names of the first communicants. We read:

> October the 24th, 1841. The following persons made their 1st Communion under the direction of C. I. Coomes:

Thomas Medcalf	Matilda Ann Wise
William Johnson	Elizabeth Wise
James McMillen	Sarah Ann Wise
Felix Wise	Emile Fowler
Henry Brewer	Elizabeth French
Sylvester Nally	Ellen Johnson
Athanasius Ryan	Rebecca Pearl
William French	Ann Padgett
Oliver French	Mary Emile Norris
Uriah Brewer	Eliza Jane Norris
Edward Medcalf	Malvina Ann Norris
George W. Medley	Mary Elizabeth Arnold
John K. Medcalf	Victoria Cole
	Frances Cole

Bishop Flaget and his coadjutor, Chabrat, moved from Bardstown to Louisville at the beginning of 1842 and, later in the year, a jubilee, promulgated by Pope Gregory XVI to unite the world in prayer for the persecuted Church in Spain, was given in the diocese. Father Coomes preserved the memory of this jubilee in Kentucky, when he wrote in the parish records of St. Clare's:

> Jubilee granted by Pope Gregory the 16th in the year 1842, to unite all Christians, throughout the world, in fervent prayer to God in behalf of suffering Spain. The exercises of this Jubilee commenced at St. Clare's Church on the 23rd day of October 1842 & continued for 4 days. They were given by the Reverend Fathers M. J. Spalding, A. Degauquier & C. I. Coomes, the pastor of the congregation. These exercises were attended with great piety & zeal by the congregation, as was proved by the number of communions on the last day, which was one hundred & forty-eight, of which number 21 received the Bread of Life for the first time.

Father Spalding, mentioned above, was consecrated coadjutor to the venerable Flaget in 1848, following the retirement, because of failing eyesight, of Bishop Chabrat. The new coadjutor succeeded Flaget at the latter's death in 1850, and in 1864 was appointed archbishop of Baltimore. The Reverend Augustine Degauquier was Father Coomes' neighbor to the west and had charge of the missions in Grayson County.

In the year after the jubilee, Father Evremond, at the invitation of the pastor, conducted a retreat at Colesburg, and at the close of the spiritual exercises on October 25 Bishop Flaget administered the sacrament of confirmation to fifty-six members of the parish. It was the last visit of the first bishop of the diocese to the mission on Clear Creek.

Perhaps it was on this occasion that the venerable prelate advised Father Coomes and his trustees to erect a new house of God, for the old church, built of logs, was in a dilapidated state. Work was begun on the second church. Constructed of bricks made on the property, it stood on or adjoining the site of the original church, and its location is marked by the cemetery where the dead of the parish have been interred since the establishment of the parish.

In 1884, B. J. Webb stated in his CENTENARY OF CATHOLICITY IN KENTUCKY:

> The old log-church of St. Clare, which had held its place for so many years in the beautiful cross-shaped valley that lies nestled between the spurs of the famed Muldraugh's Hill, gave way more than forty years ago to a structure of bricks and mortar that was scarcely an improvement on its own rude simplicity.

No doubt the new building was not an elaborate structure, but it must have appeared, in the eyes of the poor people on Clear Creek, like a cathedral in the wilderness.

The newly consecrated Bishop Spalding made an episcopal visitation to Colesburg in 1848. He was assisted by the pastor, Father Coomes, Father David A. Deparcq, a valiant missionary who had labored principally in the churches in Marion County, and Father James Madison Lancaster, whose lst years were spent as pastor at Frankfort and vicar general of the Covington Diocese. The following account of the visitation appeared in the Louisville CATHOLIC ADVOCATE:

> Bishop M. J. Spalding and Father Deparcq arrived at St. Clare's Church on the morning of September 25. Here they found the zealous pastor of the congregation, Rev. Charles I. Coomes, already engaged in preparing the children for Confirmation and first Communion. The people were also in attendance in considerable numbers, and the exercises of the retreat were immediatly commenced under the direction of Rev. D. A. Deparcq, who gave two solid and very useful instructions daily. The Bishop also gave an instruction each day to the children preparing for Confirmation and first Communion. The Rev. Father Lancaster arrived on Tuesday evening and gave valuable assistance to the missionaries. The eagerness with which the good people of the congregation listened to the instruction, the recollection and piety in the church, and their earnestness in preparing for worthily approaching the sacraments, were truly edifying, and spoke favorably of the zeal of their pastor.
>
> The retreat closed on Wednesday morning, the 27th, with a general Communion of the congregation and the Episcopal Visitation. The Bishop administered confirmation to thirty-seven persons, of whom two were converts to our holy religion. The total number of Communicants was 140, of whom nine received Holy Communion for the first time. The total number of families in the congregation is about forty. The zeal and practical piety of the little congregation may be inferred from the fact that there are not more than two or three adults in it who are not regular Communicants.
>
> In the Episcopal Visitation, the Bishop called to the attention of the congregation the condition of the cemetery, adjoining the church, which was in a neglected state. He also made arrangements to have the lot, on which the church is built, properly deeded and, likewise to have the church itself blessed, both of these things having been neglected hitherto.

At the close of the visitation, the Bishop visited the cemetery in procession, reciting the prayers laid down in the Pontifical. The congregaton has been stationary in point of numbers for many years.

For the next several years, St. Clare's remained the quiet, isolated, "off-the-beat" country parish. The two stagecoach routes to the south, the Jackson Highway and the Dixie Highway, by-passed it to the east and west. Then the L. & N. railroad pushed its way through the center of the congregation and over the Muldraugh Range — a triumph of engineering in those days — and in 1859 the line was completed between Louisville and Nashville. The construction work brought into the community a large number of laborers of Irish descent, some of whom died during an epidemic and were laid to rest in St. Clare's cemetery. When the road was opened, section crews to maintain the right-of-way came to take up their residence at Colesburg.

Two years later, the railroad brought the Civil War to the little parish on Clear Creek, when Union and Confederate forces attempted to seize control of the line. Camps were set up along the tracks, and in the fall and winter of 1861 a hundred thousand troops were stationed between Louisville and Bowling Green. Bishop Spalding visited the camp at the Green River in January, 1862, and directed Father Coomes to administer to the soldiers in this district. In August, he appointed the Reverend Polydorus Fermont, of New Haven, to take care of St. Clare's in order that Father Coomes might have more time for his duties as chaplain.

Minor skirmishes took place in the Muldraugh hills, and in one of Morgan's raids, two great trestles, eighty feet in height and five hundred feet long, were destroyed by fire. Seven members of the parish, James W. French, Charles French, George Spink, Loyd French, James Brewer, John J. Ryan and Thomas Spink, served in the Union army during the Civil War. One member of the parish, Randolph French, served with the Confederate Army.

In December, 1863, the Jesuit Fathers Arnold Damen and James VanGoch, of the St. Louis province, conducted a spiritual retreat at St. Clare's. Bishop Spalding, in his JOURNAL, notes that the mission was a great success. One hundred and seventy-seven parishioners received the sacraments and there were two converts to the Faith.

Father Fermont, who was born in Belgium in 1833 and came to Kentucky shortly after his ordination in 1859, moved from New Haven to Colesburg in 1864 and became the first resident pastor of St. Clare's. The CATHOLIC DIRECTORY states that he attended "the mission station of Shepherdsville occasionally." Three years later, he was transferred from St. Clare's. His later years were spent at St. Charles Church in Marion County, and after his retirement in 1893, he returned to his native land, where he died in 1906.

Father Fermont was in ill health from May 1865 to June 1866 and, during this period, St. Clare's Church was attended by the Reverend Michael Power from the Cathedral of the Assumption. Father Power was born in Ireland in 1827 and received sacred orders in Louisville in 1855. His death took place in Louisville in 1879.

The Reverend Terrence J. Disney, who succeeded Father Fermont in 1867, was born in Ireland in 1835 and, having made his ecclesiastical studies in Kentucky, was elevated to the priesthood in 1862. He took up residence in the more promising congregation at Elizabethtown about 1872, and Colesburg again became a misison station. Early in the next year, he was appointed pastor of the newly established Sacred Heart parish in Louisville, where he died in 1891.

Father Disney's successor at Elizabethtown was the future bishop James J. Ryan, who attended St. Clare's Church for about a year. Father Ryan was born in Ireland in 1848 and was ordained in Louisville in 1871. He was affiliated with the Diocese of Peoria six years later and was consecrated bishop of Alton, Illinois, in 1888. His death occurred in 1923.

PART III

THE PRESENT CHURCH OF ST. CLARE

The construction of the present church of St. Clare was begun late in 1874 by the Reverend Patrick Malachy Joseph Rock, who was born in Ireland in 1850 and received sacred orders at Louisville in 1873. In the year after his ordination, he was appointed pastor at Elizabethtown and the mission on Clear Creek. The former church, located about two miles from the station, was too far removed to serve the needs of the many railroaders, who had taken up their residence in the village, so it was torn down and the bricks were used in the building of the new St. Clare's.

Father Rock was transferred to Louisville in the following spring. The last thirty-nine years of his life — from 1885 until his death in 1924 — were spent at the Cathedral of the Assumption. When he left the Colesburg mission in 1875, the new church was being used for services, although it was far from being completed.

The Reverend James J. Cooke was the next pastor at Elizabethtown. He served the Clear Creek congregation for one year. Father Cooke was born in Ireland about 1845 and, immediately after his ordination at Louisville in 1875, was sent by his bishop to Elizabethtown, where he died thirteen years later.

In May, 1876, St. Clare's again received a resident pastor in the person of a young Kentuckian, the Reverend John James Abell. Attached to the Church were the missions of Pitts Point, Bardstown Junction, Shepherdsville, Clermont, Gap in the Knobs and Belmont Furnace in Bullitt County. Father Abell, who was born in Hart County in 1853, was a grand-nephew of the pioneer priest, Robert A. Abell, who attended the Clear Creek congregation for a short time in 1826. Young Father Abell's first appointment after ordination was to Colesburg, where he remained until the early summer of 1888. It was during his pastorate that many improvements were made on the parish property. A sanctuary and sacristy were added to the uncompleted church in 1877, and in the next year the rectory was built. The interior of the church was finally plastered in 1882. The greatest part of his ministry was spent in Hardin County and he died in 1920 at Bethlehem Academy, where he had been chaplain for a quarter of a century.

The Reverend Stephen Aloysius Holleran succeeded Father Abell in 1888, but after residing at Colesburg for about a year, he took up his residence at the cathedral in Louisville and from there attended St. Clare's until July, 1892. Father Holleran was born in Ireland in 1860 and was ordained for the Diocese of Louisville at Baltimore, Maryland, in 1887. His death occurred in Louisville in 1935.

The Reverend Edward James Hart was appointed resident pastor at Colesburg in 1892. A new mission station, that of Lebanon Junction, was attached to St. Clare's and the pastor occasionally visited the few Catholics in that locality. Father Hart, who was born in New York City in 1864, and elevated to the priesthood at Louisville in 1891, was transferred to the Church of St. Francis of Assisi at St. Francis in Marion County in October, 1896. Ill health forced his retirement in 1903 and he returned to the East. His death took place at Jersey City, New Jersey, in the following year.

Father Hart's successor was the Reverend Edward William Fahrenbach, who was born in Louisville in 1853 and received sacred orders in 1876. He had charge of the congregation until November, 1901. His death took place in his native city in 1924. During his pastorate our nation was engaged in the Spanish-American War and three young men from St. Clare's, Henry French, Hilary Spink and Thomas Leech, enlisted in the armed forces of their country.

We come now to the Reverend John Gastaldi, whose long service of twenty-seven years at St. Clare's is well rememberd by the older members of the con-

gregation. Born in Turin, Italy, in 1865, he was ordained in his native land in 1891 and six years later affiliated with the Diocese of Louisville.

In November, 1903, two years after his arrival at Colesburg, the Reverend Thomas J. Hayes of Bowling Green and Charles P. Raffo conducted a mission in his parish. The diocesan paper, THE RECORD, in giving an account of the spiritual exercises, remarked:

> The good people of Colesburg have had a blessed time, and the memory of their great mission will be a lasting one. They were fortunate in having two such zealous and capable missionaries as Fathers Hayes and Raffo.

Late in the next year, Father Gastaldi prevailed upon his parishoners to raise funds to complete the church. The plastered walls were painted and decorated, art glass windows were installed and the sanctuary was equipped with new furniture. On June 1, 1905, THE RECORD reported:

> On last Sunday, the Forty Hours Prayer was begun in the newly frescoed and decorated Church of St. Clare at Colesburg. This venerable church has been greatly embellished. Its frescoes alone cost $350. New stained glass windows have taken the place of the old ones, and new furniture has been added, making it interiorly one of the handsomest in the diocese. All this speaks well for the faith, devotion and generosity of that good old congregation.

In an endeavor to induce more Catholics to settle in St. Clare's congregation, Father Gastaldi wrote to the editor of the Louisville diocesan newspaper in September, 1906:

> I am glad to read in THE RECORD that you are from time to time asked for information regarding where to buy or rent a farm close to church and pastor. Now I take the liberty to inform you that here around Colesburg are several good farms for sale, of different sizes and prices, and near to the church: If you know of some good Catholic families who wish to locate in this place, I would be very happy to be put in communication with them and give any required information. Colesburg is an ideal place, good land and cheap. There is a church with a resident pastor and a strong possibility of having a Catholic school in the near future.

We have no record of any families answering the appeal of Father Gastaldi to locate on the land in the parish on Clear Creek, and the hopes of having a parochial school never materialized.

On October 8, 1906, Father Rock, who had built the second church of St. Clare, returned to conduct a mission. The spiritual exercises were well received and the parishioners were happy to see again their former pastor, now the rector of the Cathedral of the Assumption, who had served them so faithfully thirty years before.

Father Gastaldi visited his native land in the spring of 1907 and, after an enjoyable stay with his aged mother and relatives, arrived back in Colesburg in the following August. He was agreeably surprised to find that, during his absence, the members of the congregation had procured for the church two statues, one of the Blessed Virgin and the other of St. Joseph, and also had installed new furniture throughout the rectory.

The year 1908 marked the centennial of the opening of the first church of St. Clare. In preparation for this event, a mission was given by the Passionist Father Benedict Hanley in June. The observance of the one hundredth anniversary was held on the feast of St. Clare, August 12. One of the visitors at Colesburg on that memorable day reported in THE RECORD:

Few celebrations have taken place which were as sure to give God glory and Christian joy to its partakers, as the grand Centenary at Colesburg. It was the crowning of a noble work and the successful outcome of weeks of spiritual preparation by congregation and pastor; not to speak of the material decorations of God's Temple and the beautiful lawn surrounding it.

The first part of the celebration was the early Mass with a continuous throng of pious communicants receiving the Sacraments. At nine o'clock, the Louisville train brought in a crowd of visiting clergy and laity, who had come to rejoice over the work done and to sing together the hymn of thanks to the Almighty.

The church was soon overcrowded; people of all denominations filled every available place, so that it was hard to get in or out. The procession of priests and altar boys started from the rectory and the Solemn High Mass of thanksgiving was offered up by the Rev. Pastor, assisted by the Rev. G. Vantroostenberghe and Rev. M. Melody as deacon and sub-deacon. Rev. Father J. J. Pike had charge of the ceremonies. Rev. Father Daly, the popular and saintly dean of Elizabethtown, Rev. Fathers Lynch of Henderson, Haynes of Bowling Green, Felten of St. Augustine's, Louisville, Drury, the Loretto chaplain, all in cassock and surplice, had their place in the sanctuary; while Father Van de Pitte presided at the organ for the Gregorian Mass "De Angelis" sung by Rev. Father Pieters of Fredericktown. Rev. Father Raffo, of Louisville, delighted the large congregation with a most eloquent address on the occasion of this celebration. After Mass, the visiting clergy gathered in the rectory and were served a banquet by the ever-generous ladies of the congregation. The lay visitors were not forgotten and a most bountiful dinner was served on the grounds to all present, seasoned with the beautiful strains of Father Daly's band.

When evening came, the visitors from Louisville boarded the train to go back to the city and the parishioners returned to their homes, deeply impressed with the centennial celebration at St. Clare's.

A mission was given at Colesburg by the Passionist Father Xavier Sutton in June, 1910, and three years later another successful mission was conducted by the Paulist Fathers Devery and Alord. At the conclusion of both spiritual retreats, a mission was held in the growing congregation at Lebanon Junction.

A gala day in the history of St. Clare's occurred on July 27, 1916, when Father Gastaldi observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination. The little church was crowded to capacity by parishioners and friends, who assembled to give honor to the beloved priest. A solemn high Mass of thanksgiving was offered by the Reverend Jubilarian in the presence of the Most Reverend Denis O'Donaghue, bishop of the diocese, and the following clergymen: Charles P. Raffo, Thomas J. Hayes, Thomas W. White, Francis J. Felten, D. A. Driscoll, William and Joseph Hogarty, William Dunn Pike, R. C. Ruff, Vincent Sciolla, Joseph Odendahl, S. J. and Guido Mensa, Eugene Bertello, Edward W. Fahrenbach, Louis Beruatto and D. Autheman. All of the above mentioned, with the exception of Fathers Beruatto and Autheman, who are now residing in their native Italy, have been called to their eternal reward. Young Father Bertello of the neighboring Chapeze missions was the first to die. He was killed in the train wreck at Shepherdsville in December of the following year.

Father Hayes preached the jubilee sermon and the music for the Mass was rendered by the choir of St. Joseph's Church, Bowling Green. THE RECORD, in giving a lengthy account of the celebration, informs us that "Father Gastaldi was the recipient of many beautiful presents, among them an exquisite chalice from his dear old mother in Italy. He was also presented with purses from his congregations at Colesburg and Lebanon Junction."

In the spring of 1917, our nation was plunged into World War I. Young men throughout the country were drafted into service, and those taken from the Colesburg parish were Adrian Brian, Frank Booth, Silas Booth, Waverly French, Hugo Brian, Lawrence Booth, Cecil French, James House and Everett Fowler. The service flag of St. Clare's, which was blessed on August 12, 1918, contained a gold star for Waverly French, who died of the "flu" in camp.

The long pastorate of Father Gastaldi came to an end in 1928. In ill health and with the weight of years pressing heavily upon him, he resigned from his parish in December and returned to the land of his birth, where he died on June 12, 1931.

The Reverend John J. Glenn succeeded Father Gastaldi at Colesburg and remained until 1933. Father Glenn organized the Holy Name Society at St. Clare's. He is now in charge of St. Thomas More Church in Paducah.

Father Glenn's successor was the present pastor at Elizabethtown, the Rev. Wilfrid J. Hayden, who served the congregation until 1940. The disastrous Ohio River flood occurred in the spring of 1937; and although Colesburg is located some twenty miles from the river, the flood extended up the valley of Clear Creek and several feet of muddy water covered the parish property, causing considerable damage to the church and rectory. Father Hayden, after making the necessary repairs as soon as the water receded, turned his attention to the needs of his congregation at Lebanon Junction. In 1906, when this mission station was attended from Bardstown Junction, a temporary church was established in a former one-room school building. The Catholic population had now grown so large that a permanent edifice became imperative. The new Church of St. Benedict was dedicated in December, 1938.

A momentous event in the history of the diocese occurred in December, 1937, when the See of Louisville was elevated to the dignity of an archdiocese and Bishop Floersh, who had ruled the diocese since 1923, became its first archbishop.

The Reverend Harold Ritter followed Father Hayden to Colesburg in 1940, and in the next year, with the attack on Pearl Harbor, our country became engaged in World War II. Thirteen young members of St. Clare's parish saw service in the armed forces. Francis Brian, Joseph Ryan, Stanley Gilkey, Joseph Powell, Jr., Frank Thomas, Donald Brian, Carl Booth, James Huff, Robert Lucas, Walter Thomas and Julius Wise were in the Army; Edward Gilkey served in the Navy and Martha Brian volunteered for the Waves.

When the war ended, Father Ritter was fortunate in procuring three Sisters of Charity of Nazareth to teach in the public school at Colesburg. To provide for the needs of the Sisters, a house on the parish property was fitted up for a convent and in the fall of 1945, Sister Agnes, Ellen Richard and Aniceta took up their residence there. As we have seen, Father Gastaldi had hopes, in 1906, of establishing a parachial school; but with the passing of the years the congregation declined in membership, and the project was abandoned.

Father Ritter was transferred to Louisville in 1951 to establish the Church of St. John Vianney. During his pastorate at Colesburg, three successful missions were conducted by the Passionists Fathers at St. Clare's and St. Benedict's in Lebanon Junction. He also built a small brick school of four classrooms at this latter parish. It was dedicated on November 6, 1949, and was the first parochial school in Bullitt County.

On the occasion of the blessing of the school, THE RECORD reported:

> During World War I, the Government took over the area known at present as Fort Knox. When this was done, the Catholic congregation at Stithton, located within the government area, was dispersed. Some of the Stithton people then moved into the neighborhood of Lebanon Junction, increasing the size of the congregation.

The present pastor, the Reverend Roger A. Boehmicke, was given charge of Colesburg and Lebanon Junction in February, 1951, and a few months later he arranged for a mission to be given by the Franciscan Father Cyril Georgel in the parishes under his care.

St. Clare's had long since ceased to be the flourishing congregation it was around the turn of the century. The railroad maintenance crews had been removed; and with the advent of more powerful locomotives, the extra engines, stationed at Colesburg to help move the heavy trains over the Muldraugh Range, were no longer needed. In the years that followed World War I, the gradual encroachment of the Fort Knox territory extended into the parish, thereby removing many old established families from their farms. At last, in July 1954, Father Boehmicke, in order to serve most effectively all the people under his jurisdiction, consulted with Archbishop Floersh about the feasibility of moving his headquarters to Lebanon Junction. The archbishop replied:

> In accordance with your request of July 15th, in order to render more effective care to the greater number of faithful entrusted to your care, I hereby authorize you to change your place of residence to the house which adjoins the church of St. Benedict at Lebanon Junction, since the recent expansion of the military post at Fort Knox has greatly reduced the number of faithful at Colesburg and since these will be able to be adequately cared for by you from your new residence at Lebanon Junction.

Father Boehmicke moved to Lebanon Junction on August 1 of that year and the Clear Creek congregation became a mission again. During its long history, the parish has been faithfully served by the clergy of the Diocese and, in turn, the congregation has been blessed with vocations to the religious life. Father Dunstan Bryan, O.F.M. Conv., who was baptized at St. Clare's, was ordained in 1937. Father Bertrand Jerome Brian returned home to offer his first solemn Mass in 1950, and in the next year the Reverend John H. Morgan, another son of the parish had the happiness of offering the Holy Sacrifice for the first time within the hallowed walls of the venerable church. Many daughters of the parish entered religious communities. Sister Udora, Sister Margaret Wise, Sister Sabina O'Brian, Sister Frances Miriam Brian, and Sister Johanna Brian joined the Loretines; and Sister Timon Wheatley became a Sister of St. Joseph.

1958 marks the sesquicentennial of St. Clare's. One hundred and fifty years have passed since the little group of pioneers assembled for Mass for the first time in the log cabin church on Clear Creek. Their descendants will gather at Colesburg on Sunday, August 17, for the jubilee celebration and, during the solemn high Mass of thanksgiving, Archbishop Floersh and his auxiliary, Bishop Maloney, and the clergy of the archdiocese will be united with them in prayer that Almighty God may bestow His choicest blessings upon them and their parish.